

Ballet

TODAY

MAY, 1953
Price 2/-



KIRSTEN SIMONE
Royal Danish Ballet



Beryl Grey and Caj Selling as they appeared in *Swan Lake* during their season at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (reviewed by Fernau Hall on page 6 last month in our *London Reviews*). The reviews of their performances in other ballets appear in this issue.

Ballet

TODAY

Backstage

Established

1946

EXHIBITION

Like most people, I always promise myself that *one day* I will really spend more time in our national museums soaking up the atmosphere of the past, admiring the skill of those great craftsmen of bygone days and remembering once again that although our life is cushioned by modern inventions, we still have much to learn from our forebears.

So that when I was invited to attend the Doboujinsky Memorial Exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum I felt that I had put off my visit long enough and it was now or never. I am glad I went. Doboujinsky is one of that wonderful group of Russian artists who got together in the days of Diaghilev—Benois, Roerich, Bakst, Bilibin, and were also connected with *Mir Isskoustva* (World of Art) the journal founded by Diaghilev. Doboujinsky was such a versatile artist. Decor, costumes, book cover designs and posters, his fertile imagination, enhanced them all, and it is easy to see why he was invited by Stanislavsky to design for the Moscow Art Theatre before the First World War. He came to Europe many times between then and 1917, but after the Revolution remained in St. Petersburg until 1924, becoming a director of the Opera there. In 1924 he went to Lithuania and worked on theatre decor, later his work took him to Paris, Brussels, Dresden and other European cities. He came to London with the Lithu-

anian Ballet in 1935 and the following year designed the decor for *Casse Noisette* at Sadler's Wells. He was responsible for important decors in many of the famous Companies. He went to the United States and did the decor of the *Masqued Ball* at the Metropolitan Opera House, and ballets for the Ballet Theatre. In 1941 he decorated *Ballet Imperial* for the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo in New York. Later he provided decors for the Opéra in Paris, the de Cuevas Company and last year for our own Ballet Rambert's production of *Coppelia*.

One thing which struck me forcibly in this splendid display of the work of an artist whose career spans the whole history of modern ballet since Diaghilev gave it new life in the early years of the present century, was that Doboujinsky did not draw or paint his designs for costumes on clothes-horse figures. He created *characters* in costumes who looked as if they belonged in the clothes they were wearing.

This impression was confirmed when I spoke to M. R. Doboujinsky, son of the artist, who has arranged the exhibition. He told me that his father could work any way, at home or in a train, he would sometimes do ten or more sketches in a day. With meticulous care he would get the cut of the costume and all relevant details correct for the period, then paint in the colours and finally give the drawing life by creating the countenance and

character which should go with the dress. "Not only did a dress have to be right in itself," M. Doboujinsky told me, "but it had to be right in ensemble. My father was so *honest*," he said, "even if it meant making a new drawing ten or fifteen times for one character, it had to be right." And honesty shines through his work. You wish that decor and costumes could always look like that on stage today.

The Exhibition is open until 7th June.

SPOLETO FESTIVAL

Plans for the second annual cultural Festival to be held in Spoleto have been announced in New York by composer Gian-Carlo Menotti, who is President of Festival Foundation, Inc., the non-profit organisation which sponsors the project. The Festival, which brings together young creative artists from Europe and America, will open on June 11 and continue until July 12th.

Jerome Robbins, the American choreographer, will present a second edition of his *Ballets U.S.A.* including ballets produced at Spoleto in 1958, as well as a new work with a score by American composer Aaron Copland and choreographed by Robbins. After the Festival the new Robbins' production will be seen in several European countries.

No. 4

VOL. 12

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Cover Portrait

Kirsten Simone. At a rehearsal room window. Photo: Erik Betting.



Our next issue will be published on 28th May

B A C K = S T A G E

(continued)

THE ROYAL BALLET

Frederick Ashton's one-act ballet *Les Rendezvous* to Daniel Auber's music from *L'Enfant Prodigue*, and with William Chappell's costumes will receive its first Covent Garden performance on May 7th. The cast will include Nadia Nerina and Brian Shaw. This ballet was first performed at the Sadler's Wells Theatre in 1933, with Alicia Markova and Stanislas Idzikowski.

Now that the members of the Royal Ballet on tour in Australia and New Zealand have returned we shall be seeing some of them at Covent Garden. On May 6th Lynn Seymour and Donald MacLeary (who will be remembered for the roles of the Adolescents which they created in *The Burrow*) will be dancing in *Swan Lake* for the first time in England; Susan Alexander and Donald Britton will dance *Coppelia* on May 9th, and Anne Heaton and Donald MacLeary will be seen in *Giselle* on May 11th. Henry Legerton will also appear in each of these ballets.

During the month Gary Burne will take the role of Satan in *Job*. Then on May 11th a section of the Royal Ballet will make a four weeks' tour of the provinces; see "Programmes for the Month" this issue.

NEWS HERE AND THERE

Coppelia directed by Algeranoff and with designs by Joseph Carl opened very successfully at the Den Norske Opera for the first ballet season in Oslo.

After ten years with Ballet Rambert Norman Dixon has left the Company in order to devote more time to choreographing new ballets. Two have already been produced by the Sunday Ballet Club, *Voice in the Wilderness* and *The Cord*. The latter will be reviewed in our next edition.

WORLD DANCE COURSE

For those interested in the dance, there is something for everybody at the World Dance Course organised by the Cultural Association for Choreographic Research to commence Thursday July 16th and continue to Saturday July 25th at La Salle Pleyel, 252, Faubourg St-Honoré, Paris. Serge Lifar is the President; administrative directors are Ginette Bastien and Jean Dorcy, with the co-operation of qualified teachers and well-known students of the dance. There is a beginners course, specially designed for teachers, physical training teachers, heads of schools and amateurs interested in the dance and the arts. The intermediate and advanced courses are intended for more experienced people, dancers and dancing teachers who wish to increase their theoretical and practical knowledge, or to acquire new ideas, and who wish to keep in touch with the latest choreography. Candidates may dispense with the physical coaching completely or in part, and, if they wish, follow the course merely as spectators.

The fee is 22,000 francs and details of where to write appear on another page in this issue.

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL, 1959

The Ballet Season at the Edinburgh Festival this year will include three companies for one week each.

During the first week (August 24th to 29th) Jean Babilée, who last appeared at the Festival with Les Ballets des Champs-Élysées in 1949, returns, this time with his own company, and will present two programmes of short ballets. The first programme will include the well-known *Le Jeune Homme et La Mort*, a ballet created by Roland Petit to music by Bach, and the second will include *Prelude a L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* by Lifar to Debussy's score. The company will be led by Jean Babilée himself; other dancers will include Jovanka Biegovitch, Claire Sombert and Gerard Ohn.

The National Ballet of Finland (August 31st to September 5th) will present three programmes of a more classical nature. Among the ballets to be performed will be *L'Epreuve d'Amour*, *The Black Swan* and *Giselle*, this last in a new choreography by Lavrovsky, choreographer at the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow. Also to be included is the ballet entitled *Scaramouche* to music by Sibelius. The Ballet Master and chief choreographer of the Company is George Gé, who has also worked with the Royal Swedish Ballet and in Paris. The National Ballet of Finland has travelled widely in Europe and is to visit the U.S.A., Cuba and Mexico after the Festival.

For the last week (September 7th to 12th) the Jerome Robbins Ballet will present four ballets. The company consists of 20 solo dancers forming a corps trained both for classical ballet and for contemporary jazz techniques. Robert Prince has provided a jazz score for perhaps the most unusual ballet to European eyes. Entitled *N.Y. Export, Op. Jazz*, it was inspired by the American teenagers' preoccupation with popular dancing, the dancers wearing jeans and gym shoes. Aaron Copland has been commissioned to provide music for a new ballet, his first for 15 years. The settings have been designed by such artists as Ben Shahu and Saul Steinberg. Jerome Robbins, already well known for his production of *West Side Story*, is the choreographer of all four ballets, the others being *Afternoon of a Faun* (Debussy) and *The Concert* to music by Chopin.

NO DANCING FOR CARON

It does not look as if Leslie Caron will change her mind and resume her dancing career, not even on the screen, for in her next film she takes the role of Jennifer Dubedat, heroine of George Bernard Shaw's famous play *The Doctor's Dilemma*. The last time Miss Caron danced on the screen was in *Daddy Long Legs* filmed in 1954, and even in her recent success *Gigi*, hailed as one of the best musicals ever filmed, she did not dance. "I find acting more stimulating" she says, "it has more to offer me than dancing".

FESTIVAL BALLET

After the Company's impressive eleventh European tour (details of which appear on page 25) Festival Ballet will return to England on 22nd June to appear at the Pavilion Theatre Bournemouth for one week and the following week will be at the New Theatre, Oxford. Their London season at the Royal Festival Hall commences 14th July and runs through to 12th September, and in addition to the world première of the Noel Coward ballet *London Morning* (previously reported) which should be a great social event in London, there will also be another new ballet entitled *Vision of Chopin*, with music by Chopin and choreography by Lichine. Also during the summer season *Prince Igor* and *Spectre de la Rose* will be reproduced.

Toni Lander is to return as a permanent member, and the Company will also be augmented by Carla Fracci, prima ballerina of La Scala, Milan. Artists to rejoin the Company include Oleg Briansky for the summer season and Vassilie Trunoff, who recently returned from Australia. Guest artists of international fame will be engaged throughout the season, including Yvette Chauviré and Alicia Markova.

Following this star-studded London season the Company leaves for Dublin where they will appear at the Dublin International Theatre Festival. October will then see them off on another European tour, this time to Oslo, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Germany. A most exciting year will wind up with their return to England for the usual Christmas Season in London at Royal Festival, commencing on 26th December.

UNWELCOME MISSIVE

We have grown accustomed to re-addressing fan letters and personal mail sent to us for forwarding to dancers, but I do hope that the letter from the Income Tax authorities which reached me this week addressed to Festival Ballet at Surbiton is only the bright idea of some solitary individual, and not the forerunner of endless and prolific correspondence. I have enough trouble keeping up with my own forms!

NEWS AT PRESS TIME

Her Majesty the Queen and H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh will attend a Gala performance to be given by the Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House on May 7th in honour of His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah of Iran. There is to be a special programme for the occasion, which will include the first performance at the Royal Opera House of Frederick Ashton's one-act ballet *Les Rendezvous*, with Nadia Nerina and Brian Shaw in the cast. Anya Linden and David Blair will dance Swanilda and Franz in *Coppelia* Act III, and the soloists in *Cinderella* Act II will be Svetlana Beriosova, Michaela Somes and Alexander Grant. The Box Office opened on April 15th and closed on April 18th, and only postal applications for tickets were accepted.

ROYAL BALLET PRICES TOO HIGH

—SAY NEW ZEALANDERS

Letter from **KEITH WOODS**, *Ballet Today* Correspondent in Auckland

THERE is some feeling here against the Royal Ballet (due in Auckland from April 6-18) although personally I am convinced that such feeling is misdirected.

Booking arrangements and prices are such that many dancers and students—the people who should attend—will be unable to do so, and even the more fortunate of these will not see more than one or two performances in the whole season. I expected the prices to be high for we cannot expect the British government to subsidise the company while in New Zealand, or Covent Garden to make a loss, while travelling expenses are very high. But Williamson's have preferential bookings—four seats, one of which is a Fonteyn performance—at £9 2s. 0d. Later, ordinary preferential bookings open at 37s. a seat, and finally ordinary bookings will open at 35s. a seat. These are for the whole of the stalls and dress circle (700 seats per performance). The “gods” (capacity 500) also have “preferential” bookings (personal sales only, so I don't know why they are called preferential) at 25s. a seat. When Borovansky tours N.Z. with a similar sized company and orchestra we pay 8s. 6d. in the “gods.” I think Rambert charged the same, and this is the usual price for all overseas companies; only once do I know of more than 10s. being charged. My guess is that box-office returns for N.Z. (which of course is only six weeks out of the seven-month Australasian tour) will be about £95,000—and I cannot see the costs as more than £60,000. If the costs are higher, or if the profit goes to Covent Garden I feel we have no complaint, but most people here think that Covent Garden is making an unfair profit.

I have asked the views of about 50 students and enthusiasts and all have been very bitter about the whole business. They all forget that the tour is organised by a commercial management which has practically a monopoly over the Australasian theatre.

Integration of the two companies has not yet been achieved and the company we shall see is essentially the company which used to play at Sadler's Wells, which I would put on about the same plane as the Borovansky ballet (although their technique may be better, I think that the Royal will be too cold and emotionless for most New Zealanders). People have been given the impression that it is “Fonteyn's company,” and it is advertised as “the Royal Ballet from Covent Garden.”

As far as the success of the tour is concerned, I can safely predict that the houses will be full to capacity; that the bulk of the audiences will applaud every fouetté, will rave both in the theatre and outside, and will talk and eat throughout the performances; that the newspapers will be enthusiastic (unlike the English and Australian papers, they are never otherwise).

I hope that supporters of English ballet will not take exception to what I have said—I also am a supporter and only hope that the tour is a true success.

Since writing the above I have booked to see the company. It meant queueing up for nearly 36 hours and has cost what is to me a small fortune, but at least I shall see 12 of the 16 performances in Auckland. It may interest you to know that of the many students, dancers and enthusiasts that I know, only three are able to see the company. In talking to my fellow queueers a few said they had no complaints about the price—the first in my experience, although I have heard of a few others who were, without exception, moneyed people who bought season tickets and who had never been to any ballet previously. But everyone is wroth that no arrangements were made for ballet students to get any concession.

Here are a few of the many letters addressed to newspapers throughout New Zealand.

FROM THE AUCKLAND STAR

Preferential booking for Ballet

ONCE again, with the forthcoming visit of the Royal Ballet, the iniquitous system of preferential booking is brought unrelentingly to our notice. In this instance season tickets for four programmes are obtainable at a price of 45s. 6d. per performance per seat. Later, a second class of preferential booking will open at the reduced price of 37s. per seat. Nowhere is it announced in the advertisement either where in the theatre the seats are or what the non-preferential prices will be. At such charges many lovers of ballet and most young enthusiasts will be priced out of the opportunity of seeing this fine company. No doubt in a few weeks there will be added publicity for the promoters, when all-night queueing will be the order to get a chance of a cheaper seat. While it is presumably considered reasonable business ethics to price an article in limited supply as high as possible, the application of this principle to cultural entertainment is odious. The expenses of such a tour are of necessity high but at the same time they can be easily estimated in advance. With this in mind, is there any reason why all the seats should not be made available at the same time, with possible limitations in numbers sold to each applicant to reduce the possibility of black-marketeering? With the various sections of the theatre priced reasonably and differentially, and applications treated in strict order, a far fairer distribution would be obtained. Every year there is an outcry against the present system. Unless it is possible for some price control to be applied the only method of combating it is a boycott of all preferential booking. It is too much to hope that there would be such unanimity of action, as the Royal Ballet season will be a social occasion, although such action

could not fail to be successful. Much as I want to see this magnificent company, I refuse to be coerced into paying unnecessarily inflated prices.

D. J. WRIGHT.

Mt. Eden.

Ballet prices

NONE of us ever hopes to see Fonteyn from the gallery for 5s. as London ballet-lovers may. But when the Royal Ballet comes here many young people will have to be content with reviews. How many families, too, are trying to decide who can go and who can't? How many whole families cannot go at all? Each letter to the Editor on this subject of iniquitous prices and the “booking” system represents hundreds who feel this way. Yet it is always the same. The Kiwi's wrath seldom burns past an angry letter to the newspaper. In the ultimate we remain good, law-abiding malleable citizens. My wife and I and three teenage girls were thrilled at the thought of seeing Fonteyn. But can we afford it? We are sending the three girls—£5 12s. 6d. Isn't this out of all proportion? And they are not even sure of seeing the dancers of their choice. Why is there no guarantee of programme choice? **PRICED OUT.**

FROM THE NEW ZEALAND HERALD

Complaint at Cost of Ballet Tickets

SINCE the last Budget there have been many complaints of high taxation and extortion.

Mr. Nordmeyer, however, is a rank amateur when compared with those who fixed the booking arrangements for the Royal Ballet.

To be sure of seeing the most famous artists one must not only pay 45s. 6d. a seat, but also contract to view a total of four performances at a cost of £9 2s.

There is always a type of person who must be seen at such performances and is foolish enough to pay any price. Must those who are selective, but whose pockets are not so well-lined be shut out? Seats remaining after the season ticket bookings are offered at 37s. each as preferential bookings.

No choice of artists or seat is offered, the back row of the stalls in His Majesty's could well be booked at this price.

It is time that the entertainment trade realised that customers have to be wooed and won, and given service, if tax-shrunken pounds are to be extracted successfully.

It would be only right were the public to boycott these extortionate charges and monopolistic arrangements, thus forcing more reasonable terms on the entrepreneurs, enabling Auckland to enjoy and support the Royal Ballet as it deserves.

ROYAL BALLET SEASON IN AUCKLAND WILL BE REVIEWED IN A LATER ISSUE.

LONDON

REVIEWS

THE ROYAL BALLET
AT COVENT GARDEN
DANSES CONCERTANTES
JOB

BERYL GREY AND
CAJ SELLING IN
GISELLE

by FERNAU HALL

REVIVAL OF DANSES CONCERTANTES

Continuing its policy of integrating the repertoire of its two companies, the Royal Ballet revived *Dances Concertantes* at Covent Garden on 13th March. This was originally produced by Kenneth Macmillan in 1955—it was the first ballet he arranged specifically for the Theatre Ballet—and one can now see that it represents vintage Macmillan. In fact it contains some of his most original inventions; in particular the lifts in the big pas de deux still retain some of their original flavour of novelty, and make clear why Macmillan then aroused such bright hopes. (At one moment the ballerina does a supported *tour en l'air*; a few moments later she balances across the small of her partner's back, and after she has rocked back and forth several times, he somehow swings her round to the front and on to her feet.)

Mayron Lane has matured a good deal since she created the central female role, and, as one might expect, she put even more precision and spontaneity into her role; the corps de ballet also danced well, clearly revelling in the difficult steps allotted to them. But the limitations of the ballet were made even clearer by its translation to a large stage and its admirable performance. In fact Macmillan never seems to have bothered to listen hard to the music: following the disastrous precedent of other neo-classical choreographers, he improvised patterns of steps with only the most vague connection with the music. In fact a ballet must have some sort of logical structure; if it has no story, then the structure must grow out of the music. Stravinsky has the most wonderful flair for setting dancers into motion, knowing as he does exactly the sort of rhythm and phrasing they need, and all a choreographer has to do is to carry out the clear suggestions from the music. But Macmillan, lacking any real artistic guidance and cut off from the main stream of ballet tradition, made the mistake of trying to create his own structure, treating the music as no more than a background.

The terrible price he had to pay was shown very clearly in the following ballet, *Petrushka*: here Fokine made every detail of the choreography grow inevitably out of the music, while preserving his own creative independence. At times the "polychory" (choreographic counterpoint) is very complex but it is always closely linked with the rhythms and phrasing of the music, and the effect is unified and satisfying.

I cannot understand why this dramatic ballet was performed last, after a light-hearted ballet. This is becoming a common pattern at Covent Garden, but it runs counter to the excellent tradition established by Diaghilev of putting the light-hearted ballet last: this is good psychology, for it sends the audience home in a gay mood.

REVIVAL OF JOB

The revival of *Job* at Easter now seems to be a hardy annual, like the Christmas productions of *The Messiah*. It is a good idea to keep *Job* in the repertoire in this manner: it has too many faults (above all prolixity) to stay in the repertoire throughout the year, but for many reasons one welcomes the chance of seeing it again from time to time.

The main reason is of course the music—one of the finest things Vaughan Williams ever wrote. A second reason is that the ballet is unique in many ways. It has a religious theme, and in style it is almost completely modern dance. In fact it reflects two kinds of modern dance. One derives from the gentle, rather naïve movements used by Dalcroze to train children and young people in Eurhythmics—a style inspired largely by Isadora Duncan's "Greek" dancing, and dating from the beginning of this century. This style is used by the choreographer (Ninette de Valois) for the dances of the daughters and sons of Job: not with complete success, for Vaughan Williams' noble music demands something rather more dynamic—perhaps something like Morris dancing, the most vigorous of English folk dances.

The other kind of modern dance reflected in the choreography of *Job* is the violent, grotesque expressionist sort, developed by Laban, Wigman and their disciples. This emerges in the dancing of Satan, the repulsive trio War, Pestilence and Famine, and the even more repulsive Three Comforters. Here the choreography is very good of

its kind, and compares well with the work of the best modern-dance choreographers in Central Europe in the twenties. Like all such choreography it dates rather seriously, and fails to make anything like the impact it did when it was first produced; nevertheless it is of the greatest historical interest, and the dancers—superbly produced by Ninette de Valois—extract every ounce of expression out of it. As often happens when ballet dancers are well produced in modern dance, they do the movements as in the manner born, giving them a precision of line and a power far beyond the reach of most modern dancers. This is above all true of David Blair, whose Satan is quite as good as that of Anton Dolin (who created the role) and that of Robert Helpmann (who made it into one of his best roles). Being a fine artist he of course creates his own version of Satan, stressing very effectively the latent power in the poses which Satan holds so often. (Rather too often, in fact: this "masque for dancing" is very static for long periods.)

Ninette de Valois has made a number of minor changes in the choreography to adapt *Job* to the large Covent Garden stage and John Piper's decor; but, very wisely, she has left the production basically the same as when she first staged it for the Camargo Society in 1931. It was her first major work, and it adds something of real value to the repertoire, showing as it does a modern choreographer tackling a great and noble theme in a thorough and serious manner.

GREY AND SELLING IN GISELLE

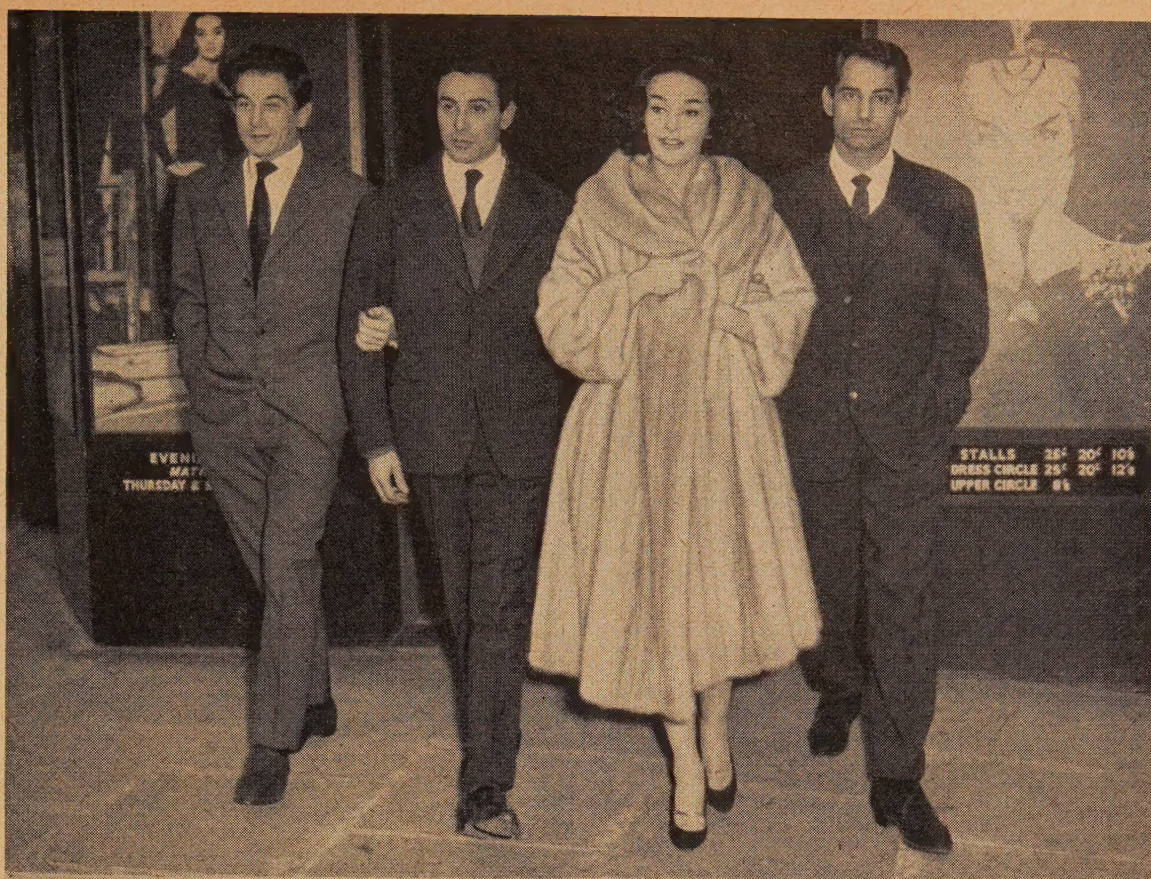
No doubt there was some good reason for it, even if I could not work this out for myself. The fact itself was clear: the improvement in Beryl Grey's *Giselle* was even more striking than the improvement in her Swan-Queen, which owed so much to the coaching she received in Russia.

This was not true, however, of the greater part of Act I of *Giselle*. Here Beryl Grey, no doubt influenced by Ulanova's example, worked very hard to make *Giselle* kittenish. She wagged a finger coyly at Albrecht when he begged for a kiss, and later pushed her hands to him and withdrew them suddenly as he tried to take them. But this teasing of Albrecht did not suit Beryl Grey at all: her height had something to do with it, but it was also a question of temperament.

Things were different the moment Beryl Grey began the mad scene; this started well, and got more impressive right up to the fall of the curtain. This was a new Beryl Grey, acting with power and maturity. Not for her the delicate nuances and sudden changes in which other ballerinas are so successful; instead, she very sensibly made everything bold and simple, establishing one mood and then maintaining it with a few clean-cut and effective movements. It was clear that she had given a good deal of thought to her interpretation, which was distinctly original. At one moment, for example, she recognised Albrecht, and went right up to him to take shelter in his arms: this was less dramatic than the usual version—in which *Giselle* suddenly turns from Albrecht in horror as she is moving towards him—but it suited Beryl Grey very well. I particularly admired the mad stare of her eyes, which came over well—though it would have come over even better if she had made up her eyes properly. (Her hair, on the other hand, was admirably dressed to frame her face, in the manner established once and for all by Grisi when she created *Giselle*.)

In Act II Beryl Grey continued to dance and act well, displaying an admirable breadth and continuity of movement. This was particularly clear in long sustained movements such as the *assemblée soutenu* followed by a *relevé* in 5th position, at which point she draped her arms over her head in a fine, noble sweeping curve that did much to bring out *Giselle*'s sadness and love for Albrecht.

Caj Selling's Albrecht was one of the finest I have ever seen. Searching for one with which to compare it, I found myself thinking of some great Danish dancers—notably Borge Ralov, the greatest Danish male dancer of the thirties and forties; Ralov was more virile and forceful, but Selling takes the palm for masculine grace. Better than any other Albrecht that I have seen, Selling suggested the prince in disguise. His acting at the moment when Hilarion confronted him with the Duke was both original and admirable: he tried to laugh away his peasant costume. The next moment *Giselle* accused him of treachery, and his embarrassment became more obvious. During the mad scene his



Pictured outside the Cambridge Theatre during her London season—Ludmilla Tcherina and (l. to r.) Milko Sparembek, Luis Dias and Vassili Sulich.

behaviour was most convincing—full of pity for Giselle, mixed with feelings of guilt and shame; he was every inch a patrician by this time, and his aristocratic manners looked incongruous against his country costume. In Act II he showed the most sensitive and imaginative understanding of the nature of the *pas d'action*, giving dramatic meaning to the steps by directing them either at the Queen of the Wilis or Giselle, and expressing Albrecht's growing exhaustion by gradually changing the tension of the top half of his body and the rhythm of his movements.

Maryon Lane's dancing in the *peasant* pas de deux was, as usual, the epitome of precision, charm, musicality and finesse. If I were devising a *cours de perfection* for would-be soloists I should set as one piece of homework the study of Maryon Lane's phrasing of her second variation

in this pas de deux: she sets each foot to the ground with exquisite pizzicato elegance and precision, exactly on the beat, while she keeps her two arms and her head moving through smooth legato curves which do not show the slightest break-through of the sharp foot-accents. In its small way this is great art.

A serious mistake was made in casting Peter Clegg as the male half of this pas de deux. I have often admired this artist in character parts, and it was distressing to see him quite out of his depth in a classical part with only a slight flavour of character. Every time he performed a step requiring a high degree of control (such as a *double tour en l'air* or a pirouette) he pulled his mouth into a grimace which spoiled the effect entirely, and he failed to make the steps flow together: each one was performed with a separate (and painfully obvious) effort.

LUDMILLA TCHERINA THEATRE BALLET AT THE CAMBRIDGE

Ludmilla Tcherina is known chiefly for her appearances in films—*Red Shoes* and *The Tales of Hoffman*—and she is due to appear in another film, *Honeymoon*. It is therefore not surprising that she has called in two film directors, Michael Powell and Jean Renoir, to help in the production of her ballets. But this has not led to any particular novelty: the art of ballet has its own laws, and film directors clearly find it difficult to think choreographically.

The most ambitious ballet in the opening programme was *The Lovers of Teruel*. This had a long list of credits in the programme reminiscent of the credit titles of a film: "Ballet inspired by a legend of the Middle Ages, after an idea by Michael Powell. Text by Loys Masson. Adaptation and direction by Raymond Rouleau. Music by Mikis Theodorakis. Choreography by *Dimitri Parlic and Milko Sparembek. Scenery and costumes by Jacques Dupont." The ballet, in fact, clearly reflected the strange mixture of collaborators. The story, for example, was an odd mixture of *Petrushka*, *Les Forains*, *Pagliacci* and the ending of *Red Shoes*. There were times when words came from loudspeakers, and at other times Tcherina herself (following the example of Ida Rubinstein and a number of modern dancers) did quite a lot of speaking from the stage. The lines she spoke had a curious *Song of Solomon* quality ("Je suis le jasmin . . . vous êtes le vent") which conflicted equally harshly with the modern violence which made up the frame of the ballet and the slightly mediaeval atmosphere of the "play" (really a ballet within a ballet).

Tcherina dominated the ballet without effort. She is extremely

beautiful, with high cheekbones and slanting eyes which she presumably inherits from her Tartar father. Her figure is so remarkable that she looks svelte even in all-over tights, which are normally unflattering to women. As a dancer she clearly has a lot of talent: her body is supple, her line good, and an occasional step suggests a strong technique. But the choreography on view at the Cambridge Theatre was so erratic, with steps put together without any real liaison, that it was impossible to judge her real powers. Some of her mime was good, but at the end (when she was building up to suicide) she gave a performance more "ham" than anything seen on the London stage for a long time, full of the most outrageous grimaces.

The music of *The Lovers of Teruel* had its moments, but much of it was banal, and it suffered from the fact that it was mixed up with a great deal of speech, together with periods of silence and sound effects. When a dancer suddenly broke into speech, the atmosphere was broken completely; and it was clear that at times words were felt essential to cover up weaknesses in the choreography. (All the same, it was scarcely necessary to put out "Je t'aime . . . je t'aime" over the loudspeakers when the heroine and her lover were fondly embracing; they might credit us spectators with at least a *tiny* bit of percipience.)

By far the best things about the ballet were its decor and lighting—the former by Jacques Dupont, the latter anonymous. The effect of a street beside a railway siding was completely convincing: one might say that the design was a shade too naturalistic for ballet, but the atmosphere (helped out by good lighting) was undeniably poetic. I particularly admired one unusual lighting effect towards the end, when a

*"Dimitri Parlic" was blocked out on the programme.

number of narrowly focussed spots on one of the upstage battens high up in the flies were made to shine down and forward, so that they enveloped the artists in a bright haze.

There was a very serious dramatic flaw at the end. Like *Tosca* and *Red Shoes*, this ballet is designed to build up to the moment when the heroine jumps to her death. We saw the husband (powerfully acted by Milko Sparembek) pounding on a wall, very melodramatically, while Tcherina moved around the stage jerking her arms in peculiar angles (rather like those used by Swanilda in her doll dance). Then—hey presto—it was all over: Tcherina simply ran up the steps and jumped. She fell quite a long way, but one hardly noticed her because she was at the back of the stage in the haze of light.

The other ambitious item at the opening was *Gunpowder Flash*: "Ballet by Jean Renoir. Music by Mikis Theodorakis. Story and direction by Jean Renoir. Scenery and costumes by Ludmilla Tcherina. Choreography by Paul Goube." It was hard to know how we were supposed to take this ballet, which represented a struggle between two states, Strongolia (science, austerity, virtue) and Molivia (leisure, smiles and free love). At times this seemed to be an attempt at a comic ballet: the Molivians, for example, were dressed in what appeared to be parodies of the "Greek" costumes of the Bolshoi *Bacchanale*, whereas the Strongolians were dressed in comic suits. But for long periods there was no suggestion of any humour in the choreography, which was jerky, pretentious and inexpressive in the most dismal French manner.

Once again the ballet revolved around Tcherina, looking stunning in black all-over tights. She was supposed to be a High Priestess, a role to which her exotic features were well suited. Like Sylvia, she began with a hard and dangerous look, but later melted; in fact, she developed into something like the vamps of the silent films. . . . I could not help wondering what that fine director Jean Renoir thought he was doing.

Like other Paris companies, the Ludmilla Tcherina Theatre Ballet is, in fact, highly international: few of the names one sees in the programme are French. But exactly the same is true of the painters belonging to the Ecole de Paris: what is intriguing is the way these cosmopolitan companies manage to be so very French—both in their good points and their faults. The Tcherina company has three good Yugoslav male dancers, but is weak in danseuses: none of them can compare in any way with Tcherina, and this is a real source of weakness—for she cannot be on stage all the time.

FERNAU HALL



— In Britain —
by
HELEN ROSS

Wednesday, 18th March—Granada—Chelsea at Nine.

Dusanka Sifnios and Dusan Trninic, two of the principal dancers of the Belgrade State Opera and Ballet, were the guest ballet dancers on this programme in a pas de deux from *Romeo and Juliet*. Dusanka Sifnios has a slim, supple body with strong legs and beautiful feet, and although the choreography of this pas de deux was undistinguished she showed that she has a strong technique, good line and excellent pirouettes. Dusan Trninic has an impressive appearance and was a strong and able partner. It is difficult to assess the talents of this couple from such a short excerpt, but they appear to be considerable. The lighting and camera technique showed the dancers to advantage with some good close-ups.

Sunday, 22nd March—B.B.C. Television—Music for You.

The ballet item in this programme was performed by Janine Charrat and Milorad Miskovitch. The impression left by the pas de deux, was that it had been a difficult one to execute. Miskovitch performed some beated steps in his solo with ease and brio, and Charrat showed virtuosity in her pirouettes. However it was the announcement of the item that was really intriguing. Mr. Eric Robinson informed us we would see the *Snowflake* pas de deux, with music by Glazounov, which had been performed by Pavlova and her partner Volinine, and that Volinine who was still alive (he died in 1955) had specially recreated this pas de deux for the dancers. As the only ballet to my knowledge in Pavlova's repertoire entitled *Snowflakes* was a version of *Casse Noisette* with music by Tchaikovsky and choreography by Clustine, I am still trying to work it out.

Thursday, 3rd April—Ass. Rediffusion—Jack Hylton's Show.

It was a pleasant surprise to see Antoinette Sibley and Graham Usher, two of the younger members of the Royal Ballet, appearing in this programme. They danced the Grand Pas de Deux from *Coppelia* Act III. Both these dancers have enormous talent and were a delight to watch. I thought that Usher was particularly outstanding in his solo. The background sets were reasonably good, but there were occasions when the camera work could have been improved upon.

GREY AND SELLING IN SLEEPING BEAUTY

REVIEWED BY OLEG KERENSKY

UNDERSTANDABLY, Aurora is not among Beryl Grey's best roles. As compared with the other two classics she has danced this season, it presents her with special problems, both technical and temperamental. On this occasion, the technical problems were well mastered, though she could not altogether disguise the fact that the choreography is often unsuitable for such a tall dancer. The notorious balances in the Rose Adagio were rather hurried; her hand came down to grasp the next partner almost as soon as it had risen into the air, but then this happens with many good dancers, and occasionally with even the greatest. Her variation in this including some spectacular high jetés, and her dancing in the last act, were good and often exciting, though the fish-dives obviously caused difficulty.

Even at its most exciting, however, the flamboyant bravura quality of her dancing struck me as stylistically wrong. All those extra flourishes of head and hands delighted the audience and suited Beryl Grey but I doubt whether they suit Aurora. In the last act pas de deux she gave her partner long intense glances which made me think irresistibly of Odile.

Not only does Beryl Grey's present dancing style seem to me to be inappropriate to Aurora but I also find her appearance and stage personality unconvincing in the role. In Act I, for example, she was much too sophisticated and mature; a more or less fixed smile got nowhere near suggesting a 16-year-old Princess's joyous discovery of flowers, romance and the joy of living. Her distress at the prick was well mimed, however, and I liked the element of mounting frenzy in the brief dance between the prick and the collapse.

Only in the Vision Scene did Beryl Grey's performance seem to me to be completely satisfactory. With choreography akin to the second act of *Swan Lake* and an atmosphere similar to the second act of *Giselle*, she was doubly in her element. Her fluent lyrical dancing with neat petits battements and high développés was most appealing and her gentle remoteness would certainly have won the heart of any prince.

Caj Selling's sympathetic personality and apparently spontaneous mime made a major contribution to the success of this scene. He has the valuable gift of arousing one's interest as soon as he walks on the stage. His formal politeness to the Countess was nicely judged, only barely concealing his boredom with her. When left alone, he raised his arms to heaven as if appealing for a miracle to make life worthwhile and then dropped them again in an expressive gesture of hopelessness. At first he was too sunk in gloom to notice the Lilac Fairy. When he did, he could scarcely believe that she had come to bring him happiness.

In the last act, Selling did not repeat his uninteresting Gala variation, nor did he attempt the Ashton variation which suits Michael Somes so well. Instead he did a series of beautifully light and graceful jetés around the stage, demonstrating his good elevation and ballon. Mercifully too, he wore an attractive silver-grey wig instead of the black one which so disfigured him at the Gala. His tall, elegant physique made him an excellent partner for Grey in the pas de deux.

The rest of the cast was familiar, with Graham Usher deputising for Brian Shaw as the Blue Bird and Gary Burne for Pirmin Trecu in the Florestan pas de trois. Only a few years ago, the Royal Ballet would have been unable to replace such important male dancers so successfully; now, the changes are scarcely noticed. Rosemary Lindsay was particularly charming and authoritative as the Lilac Fairy, and all the fairy variations in the Prologue were well danced by the more or less regular team.

The audience's enthusiasm throughout was about as unrestrained as in a provincial Italian opera-house. I do not mind applause at the end of a variation, or even on a dancer's entry, but must we have bursts of clapping while variations are still in progress?

And while I am grouching, may I express the hope that the long-promised new production of *The Sleeping Beauty* will include really magical transformation scenes, without the all too visible gauze curtains and their illusion-shattering dark hems!

HELD OVER UNTIL NEXT ISSUE

REVIVAL OF THE PRINCE OF THE PAGODAS AT COVENT GARDEN. CARMEN AMAYA'S LONDON SEASON.

Recordings

BEECHAM AT THE BALLET

Here is a feast for the ear such as only Sir Thomas Beecham can serve—convincing us that we are hearing the score for the first time, and played by some celestial orchestra. The music of Massine's famous ballet to Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique* on HMV. ALP1633, surpasses all previously recorded performances that I have heard. Perhaps his genius shines even more in his interpretation of Tchaikovsky's *Fourth Symphony*, HMV. ALP1667. This much hackneyed work becomes excitingly fresh and interesting, and new and subtle beauties are revealed though Beecham faithfully follows the composer's markings. Finally Philips' delightful little concert, SBR6253, of Grétry's *Air de Ballet* from his opera, *Zémire et Azor*—a typical period piece and of great beauty, included in the score of de Valois' ballet, *Cephalus and Procris*, for the Camargo Society—followed by Haydn's *Drum Roll Symphony*, with the overture to Mehul's *Timoleon* to round it off. All three discs are a joy to own—stretch to the limits!

FOLK DANCES

Two discs from HMV's "Music of the World" series that I found most attractive, were the Swedish Polkas and Hambos, CLP1235—Hambos are dances in waltz tune and the melodies are from folk tunes that have been handed down through the ages. There is a certain sameness about them so that only one side at a playing has its advantages. The other, CLP1244, *From The Austrian Alps*, was recorded on portable equipment at Innsbruck and Salzburg. Here the field is wider as it includes folk songs and yodelling as well as the famous Tiroler Schuhplatter. It has a charm and freshness which is very endearing.

MIDSUMMER VIGIL

Bjorn Holmgren's ballet for the Edinburgh International Ballet at last year's Festival, probably received more applause than any other in the repertoire—undeservedly some feel, but be that as it may, the score—Alfven's *Midsommarvaka*—is light, folky music and although of no great consequence, it has a strong appeal. The Swede, Fjeldstad, conducting the V.S.O., gives an excellent account of it on Philips NBE11093—recording very good.

RODEO

Agnes de Mille's ballet to Copland's specially composed score, Loring's *Billy the Kid* and Robbins' *Fancy Free* are probably the three best "American" ballets to date and Dorati on Mercury MMA11005, captures the atmosphere of four of the items of *Rodeo* to perfection. I can recommend this side without any hesitation, and for that matter the other side as well—*El Salón México* and *Danzon Cubano*. The former was choreographed by Doris Humphrey during the war—a colourful, boisterous piece that drives on relentlessly.

GISELLE

The latest record of *Giselle*, RCA. RB16086, is a cut version of Büsser's arrangement for Paris Opéra with Wolff conducting the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra. I feel that his rendering is enjoyable enough from *Giselle's* first solo onwards but it would not set the Thames on fire, nor the Seine for that matter. Unless you can go to Faier, HMV. CLP1210-1, on two discs, I prefer Blareau, Decca LXT2844. The recording may not be so good, but he has given some thought to Adam's score and gets far more out of it.

LA FÊTE ÉTRANGE

Among the piano pieces and songs of Fauré's that Andrée Howard gathered together to form the score of this delicate gossamer-like ballet, is *Le Jardin de Dolly*. This was taken from Fauré's suite inspired by the small girl, who became Debussy's step-daughter. *Dolly*, in its orchestral version by Rabaud, is given a thoroughly competent performance, Columbia 33CX1577, by the Opéra-Comique Orchestra under Tzipine, who follows it with the same composer's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Masques et Bergamasques*. The latter was commissioned by the French poet, René Fauchois, for his lyric drama, *Penelope*, first performed at the Monte Carlo Opera in 1919. A pleasant record.

THE CREATURES OF PROMÉTHEUS

That great Beethovenian conductor, Otto Klemperer, continues his series of works by this composer with the *Prometheus* and *Coriolan* Overtures and the *Second Symphony*, Columbia 33CX1615. The first overture was for Vigano's ballet which he choreographed as a tribute to Maria Theresa of Austria. The *Coriolan* formed part of Tudor's ballet, *La Gloire*, for the New York City Ballet. The performances of both overtures are outstanding but some may find his interpretation of the symphony a little heavy.

BEDFORD CROWLE

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TODAY

A MONTHLY REVIEW
DEVOTED TO DANCE
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

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In *La Sylphide* with Stanley Williams

Photo: Arnold Eagle



Kirsten Simone in *Miss Julie*

Photo: O. Kjelstrup



With Henning Kronstam in *Les Sylphides*

Photo: Mydtskov

At the age of 17—with Erik Bruhn in *A Folk Tale*

Photo: Mydtskov



KIRSTEN SIMONE

OF THE ROYAL DANISH BALLET

KIRSTEN SIMONE was born in Copenhagen in 1934. Entering the Royal Theatre Ballet School at the age of 11, she made her stage debut at, for a State Theatre, the exceptional age of 17, in the principal role in Bournonville's ballet, *A Folk Tale*. In this her long blonde tresses and a typically Danish type of beauty gave her the air, par excellence, of the story book fairy.

It was in this ballet that she commenced her artistic partnership with Erik Bruhn, an association that has recently been consolidated with the great success they shared as Jean and Julie in Cullberg's dramatic work *Miss Julie*.

A pupil of Mme. Vera Volkova, in 1956 Miss Simone was appointed a soloist of the Company (the Danish equivalent of Ballerina status) and in the year following she was selected by Dame Ninette de Valois for the role of Aurora in the production of *Sleeping Beauty* she mounted for the Danes. No stranger to our home audiences, she first appeared in this country with the Royal Danish Ballet during their advent at Covent Garden in 1953 and also with them at the 1955 Edinburgh Festival.

Then in 1958, under the aegis of Peggy Van Praagh she returned to the last-named city for yet another Festival, dancing with Danish Henning Kronstam in John Cranko's ballet *Secrets* and John Taras *Octet*.

At the age of 4, in a private school

Photo: Mydtskov



As Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty* with Henning Kronstam

Photo: Mydtskov

In 1956, she appeared with her parent company at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York.

In the past year it was the Festival of Ballet at Nervi, Italy that claimed her, where in company with a selected group from her home theatre, she danced popular pieces from Bournonville's famous *Napoli* as well as the title role in *La Sylphide*. November last again saw her in England, with Henning Kronstam as partner, dancing in the presence of the Queen Mother, H.R.H. Princess Margaret and the Princess Anne at the special Gala Performance at the London Coliseum in aid of the Royal Academy of Dancing, which Kirsten considers a very special honour.

The Ballet season in Copenhagen culminates in a Festival of Ballet Opera and Music given annually in May. Then the holidays, when comes respite and the opportunity for Kirsten to follow the sun. The personal side? Like most dancers she has little time outside her professional activities, but when she has her interests run to English novels (she speaks our language fluently) and amateur filming in which Kirsten's young brother, a dancer aspirant at the same theatre, joins enthusiastically.

Often in this country for TV such as "Chelsea at Nine" and other featured programmes, she has appeared on the stage in Norway, Sweden, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Belgium. However, she thinks the most perceptive audiences are to be found in England and America.

ROLES DANCED

Hilde	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>A Folk Tale</i>
The Sugar Plum Fairy	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Casse Noisette</i>
The Sleepwalker	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Night Shadow</i>
The Slave Girl	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Prince Igor</i>
Pas de deux	}	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Les Sylphides</i>
Valse								
Prelude								
Lucile Grahn	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Pas de Quatre</i>
The Harp	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Fanfare</i>
Pas de Six	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Napoli</i>
Amelia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Dream Picture</i>
La Sylphide	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>La Sylphide</i>
Pas de Trois	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Swan Lake</i>
Eurydice	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Myth</i>
Princess Aurora	}	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>The Sleeping Beauty</i>
Lilac Fairy								
Polyhmnia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Apollon Musagète</i>
The Young Girl	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Octet</i>
The Young Girl	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Secrets</i>
The Good Fairy	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Millions D'Arlequin</i>
The Girl	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>The Lucky Journey</i>
Julie	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	in <i>Miss Julie</i>

CAREERS IN PICTURES

MICHEL RENAULT



in Romeo and Juliet

in
Photo



net

in Daphnis and Chloé





It is not generally known that Brigitte Bardot trained as a ballet dancer. Michel Renault partnered her when they danced together in a TV programme in Paris.

Photo: Serge Lido

MICHEL RENAULT

Michel Renault is a very Parisian dancer. On stage and in private life, he gives an impression of delicacy, of excessive sensibility linked to the strength of a locomotive. With powerful build and muscles, Michel Renault can with an air of insolent timidity reminiscent of Serge Peretti, be at once a dazzling technician and yet trace out steps as delicate as fine lace.

It is rare to find in a dancer of such taste an appetite for work: Michel Renault is never tired and needs the stimulus of new roles, new obstacles to overcome. His work was uneven when the Paris Opéra did not give him fresh opportunities to shine. Like a young foal, he can expend himself without thought for his reserves of strength with which he seems very richly endowed.

Naturally gay and even exuberant, his dramatic expression is of an intensity at times unrestrained but generally effective. His interpretation of *Giselle* won him a success he deserved. However, he went on to improve it still more: his artistic sense gives him a special position at the Opéra like that of Chauviré for example.

His adolescence was over when he was nominated star at the Opéra after rising through the hierarchy of the corps de ballet like a streak of lightning.

His first role was as the young man in *Mirages*. Apart from an exceptionally difficult variation (a little out of character), the problems of the role lie in the interpretation itself. Michel Renault succeeded completely in portraying this character of an adolescent candid and mischievous, then cheated and deceived. An ideal partner for the great Chauviré, he was with her responsible for the success of this ballet which has only survived because it had dancers who thoroughly understood their roles.

In the first *Romeo & Juliet* by Lifar (music by Tchaikovsky), Michel Renault served as it were his real dramatic apprenticeship. At the beginning he was criticised for excessive reserve and then after a while for exaggeration. In fact, he was trying to strike the happy medium and in the course of his efforts, he was bound to grope around a little and make certain errors. The difficulty of this pas de deux lies in presenting in a very condensed, austere, almost abstract form, a broad, diverse dramatic action, and a great freedom of execution is necessary to give it the correct emphasis throughout. Except on the days when Michel Renault's caustic wit impels him to some parody of himself, he has now achieved complete mastery of this role in which he partners Liane Daydé in her touching performance.

The same pair danced in the second *Romeo & Juliet* (music by Prokofiev). Though the subject of the second ballet is the same, it has really very little in common with the first from the point of view of execution. The rather confused, even at times incoherent choreography by Lifar, has not been improved by the various modifications it has undergone. The dancers have therefore to strive continually to combine the various thin sections. In this, Michel Renault has the thankless task of entering almost at the rise of the curtain to perform a variation of great virtuosity, the effect of which could be quite lost if he did not put some special effort into it. The character of Romeo is played by Renault, at least during the great part of the work, in a more Florentine, more playful manner than in the first. The advantage of this longer version is that it allows him to build up the dramatic expression with greater depth and his success is all the more complete.

At first, Michel Renault's interpretation of Albrecht in *Giselle* laid him open to almost general criticism from the habitués of the Paris Opéra for it completely disregarded the traditional presentation given by Lifar who was so much admired in this role. Albrecht, according to Renault is a very young man, gallant and a little frivolous who is perhaps not completely in love with Giselle. The prince's gay adventure is to have a tragic turn at the mad scene. I think that this interpretation is more valid because it is infinitely more plausible than that which makes of Prince Albrecht an eager, sincere lover from the beginning of the ballet.

The second act of *Giselle* as played by Michel Renault shows a more human prince than is usual. His grief is profound and his joy at seeing Giselle again very great, but he shows fear when the Wilis seem about to put him to death. Anguish and hope vie with love on the tortured face of the prince. Michel Renault here uses his remarkably supple body to show the tragic depths of his feelings. All this carries him far away from a tradition that has been fixed for some time.

Michel Renault, whose whole career has been spent at the Paris Opéra is a favourite child of the Parisian public. The admiration that his honest work and real talent inspire make it easy to forgive any slight caprices on his part.

A triumphant tour of the U.S.S.R. with Liane Daydé added to his brilliant international reputation. The two artists received an almost delirious welcome from the Bolshoi audience.

Michel Renault is the very symbol of solidity in French dancing.

Text by JEAN COQUELLE



MILAN, 1958

Liane Daydé and Michel Renault had another great success after their return from Russia, when they danced at the Scala in Milan. They are seen together in this picture doing what everyone else does when they go to this city, coaxing the pigeons to alight on their hands in the Piazza del Duomo.



PARIS
(left)
Claude Bessy
and
Michel Renault
in
La Licorne
the
Jean Cocteau
ballet reviewed
on page 20

VENICE
Visit of the
Rome Opera Ballet
reviewed
on page 19.
(right)
Attilia Radice
principal
of the
Rome Opera School
of Ballet



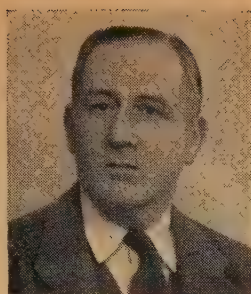
News from the World



NEW YORK
(left)
Nora Kaye
and
Scott Douglas
in the
Herbert Ross ballet
The Exchange
reviewed
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Photo:
Louis Melancon

MONTE CARLO
(right)
Visit of the
Warsaw Opera Ballet
Olga Sawicka
and
Stanislaw Szymanski
in the ballet
Mazepa
reviewed
on page 21.
Photo:
Edward Hartig





ROME OPERA BALLET IN VENICE

REPORT FROM ROBERT PATERSON

AN interesting precedent was established at the Fenice recently when the Rome Opera Ballet gave three performances on February 12th, 14th and 15th. This is the first time, so far as I am aware, that three evenings of Ballet have been included in an Opera season. Judging by the good attendance at the two performances I saw, the innovation has proved popular and has every chance of being repeated. I believe it was also the first time that the Rome ballet has appeared in Venice for many years.

The chief characteristics of this troupe are neatness and finish, also remarkable elevation in the case of the men. Signora Attilia Radice, principal of the Rome Opera school of Ballet, is to be congratulated on having trained a large corps de ballet that compares favourably with others seen here in recent years. If, with further experience, the personalities of the girls can be developed, ballets with more emotional appeal can be attempted than three out of the four that were presented here.

The Jar (from Pirandello). Libretto and music by Alfredo Casella. Choreography by Aurelio M. Milloss. In spite of breakages *The Jar* has worn well since its first appearance 35 years ago, but surely it is about time for some new aspect of Sicilian folk-life to take the stage. The story, briefly, concerns a mender of jars who inadvertently gets shut up in one he is mending and incurs its owner's wrath, because obviously he can no longer use it. The country-folk are sorry for the old mender and at night come and feed him and cheer him up. Their noise wakes up the owner who descends on the tipsy revellers and drives them away.

But they roll the jar away with them, break it open, and celebrate the old man's release with renewed dancing and rejoicing.

Casella has written most delightful music for this little fable, folkloristic in character, with plenty of verve and snap. And Milloss, who did the choreography for it in 1939, has probably never done anything better. The whole thing is most happily contrived and not a moment too long.

As the lovers Marisa Matteini and Guido Lauri were well cast. The former is wonderfully neat and crisp in all her steps, with utmost precision in the batterie, and a model turn-out. Also she has personality and considerable acting power. Lauri as her partner was a trifle too tall, but when he danced alone his splendid line and strong elevation were most arresting, and he danced with grace and feeling. As the old mender Filippo Morucci was adequate in an easy role, but, Giuseppe Gavagnini as the owner of the jar should try to vary his movements and expression. The corps de ballet was excellent and kept good time.

Decors and costumes by Renato Guttuso were charming with good colour contrasts. He is influenced by early Picasso.

Memories of an Unknown—choreographic mystery in four episodes, by Aurelio Milloss.

Music for strings, celeste and percussion by Bela Bartok. Decors and costumes by Afro.

Bartok's grey polyphony, punctuated by astounding changes of mood, has inspired Milloss to create a study in contrapuntal movement of great originality, variety and force. His theme is little more than an outline, just sufficient to arouse the imagination, and posing a problem as to its exact meaning. This is excellent, because it serves to arouse interest and maintain it. My own interpretation would be; two lovers constantly the prey of folly and temptation. As soon as one of these is overthrown the other is resuscitated, the intent being always to separate the lovers and work them harm. At the end baffled and weary the man and his love are clasped to each other, perhaps to be left in peace, for a time.

The makings of great ballet are here yet one is left unconvinced. Why? I think because one's heart is not touched. The nightmare atmosphere whilst gripping us is too weird and fantastic to move us except for one moment towards the end. I hope I am wrong but I fear the work will not live as it stands at present. Yet, if it could be made slightly more human, with more than just a hint of hope and courage to overcome wickedness, we should be elevated and the work proclaimed a masterpiece. Of its sincerity there is no question.

From another angle the ballet is interesting because it is a manifestation of the male dancer's potentiality as opposed to that of the ballerina. In this case the girl has much to do, but the three men predominate throughout and provide the main source of interest. Giovanni Notari as the Man gave an outstanding performance. His elevation is what distinguishes him; not a mere matter of ascent and descent but of what he can do while still in the air. Nearly always he is able to remain aloft enough to execute some rapid movement which is varied at the next leap into something with a different meaning. At one incredible moment he appears to tie himself into a knot, disentangling as he comes down. Walter Zappolini as the Demon can almost rival Golovine in tours en l'air taken either to right or left at equal speed. But his make-up should be more sinister, his expression is too placid and suave. Filippo Morucci as Madness, whilst not so active as the other two, outdid them in acting. His sustained frenzies were excellent.

As the girl Carmen Panader showed a beautiful line, seen to great advantage in her arabesques. She is a graceful and accomplished dancer but needs to vary her expression (this goes for nearly every girl in the troupe). The electric blue wig she wears is unbefitting against a rather dark make-up, and the blue tarlatan gives a cold effect at variance with the passion of the character.

The corps de ballet scarcely came into the picture, the ballet being practically a pas de

quatre; but their fleeting appearances were well timed, especially at the change of mood towards the end.

Estro Arguto (literally "piquant enthusiasm").—Choreographic concerto in three movements by Aurelio Milloss set to Prokofiev's third piano concerto. Solo pianist, Gino Diamanti.

The music of this concerto paints a very definite picture of its own; therefore, it is not good material on which to build an entirely abstract ballet. If an abstract work is insisted on, then it must have such convincing and varied choreography that it can hold its own with the music which otherwise must swamp it. And that is just what happened here; the ballet got in the way of the music.

The first movement, with the full corps de ballet in practice dress against a bare cyclorama was passable. But after that there was little or no invention and a lot of repetition. No matter what the mood of the music might be, highly romantic for the most part, the corps pursued its way in what was little more than a display of eurythmics. To maintain interest such a large corps should have been divided into several parts, each with something different to do. As it was they were only divided into two parts, and were often behind the beat and under-rehearsed.

The two soloists, Attilia Radice and Walter Zappolini were well matched, but apart from Zappolini's sparkling entrechats six they produced nothing of interest, and so much repetition of pirouette and chaîné quickly became boring.

Gino Diamanti as solo pianist, gave a passionate reading of the score, and really dominated everything.

Tonight The Beautiful Otero.—Divertimento in five dances by Aurelio Milloss to Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Capriccio Espagnol." Decors and costumes (extremely good) by Gianni Polidori.

This glittering and rather meretricious affair was not a bad number with which to finish. A riot of movement and colour, it displayed a much better and more contrasted use of the corps de ballet. But it was a pity to use Rimsky-Korsakoff's intensely personal evocation of a Spanish Fiesta to accompany what was really only a music-hall tour de force.

Carmen Panader as the Diva and Guido Lauri as the Bullfighter made a handsome pair, they were well matched as to height. But the choreography for them revealed no ingenuity at all, and Lauri was given no chance to show off his elevation. The corps de ballet saved the day, their grouping and timing being excellent throughout. The contrast in the costumes was shown off well, and the final entrance of some girls in very pretty tutus was quite charming.

As always the Fenice Orchestra played brilliantly under that masterful conductor they know so well—Ettore Gracis.

Photo on opposite page

The Paris Opéra did at last present *La Licorne*, this ballet by Jean Cocteau which has been promised here on several occasions and which has already in the meantime toured the world. Cocteau wrote the theme and designed the decors and costumes. The music inspired by the past was the work of the musicologist Jacques Chailley. The choreographer was Heinz Rosen. *La Licorne* was not a triumph at the Opéra but a success due to the sympathy of friends. In the first place the ensemble seemed too restrained for a large stage such as that at the Opéra. Nowadays it is no longer an avant-garde bright idea to put three musicians in evening dress on the stage in a decor inspired by a Middle Ages tapestry (Lady and the Knight). The subject is well known: a lady (Claude Bessy) possesses a unicorn (Liane Daydé) a fabulous heraldic animal who can only live when fed by the hand of a virgin. A knight (Michel Renault) appears. The beautiful lady succumbs to him, and the unicorn is plunged into sadness and despair and dies with most fearful suffering. The choreography by Heinz Rosen is very summary. Michel Renault was a dazzling sight when he entered adorned with plumes on his costume-horse, capering, prancing and leaping with an incomparable bearing. This *Licorne*, despite its delicate colours and the hand of Jean Cocteau who distinguishes everything he touches, remains a minor ballet out of keeping with the stage and scope of the Opéra.

In the same theatre, after *Phédre* which was a great success for her, Tamara Toumanova danced *Giselle*. The disappointment was very great for all admirers of Tamara Toumanova who are also fond of *Giselle*. In fact, everything seemed reduced, cut down and sophisticated in the technique and nothing remained of the character that Toumanova formerly portrayed in a sensational way as is well known.

After the last examinations which took place for the corps de ballet at the Opéra on 2nd February, the following promotions were announced: MM. Attilio Labis and Michel Descombey were named premiers danseurs of the corps de ballet. MM. Atanasoff and Franck become petits sujets; MM. Davesne and Refig coryphées; MM. Bonnefous and Schmuckl premier quadrille.

Amongst the women, there were no new première danseuse, but Mlles. Bassi, Souard and Garry were promoted to grands sujets; Mlles. Malarte, Bourillot and Oudart become petits sujets; Mlles. Guillee, Remy, Cerez coryphées; Mlles. Fuger, Thibon, Van Co, Bouvier, Loiseau premier quadrille.

The company formed by Ludmilla Tcherina made its debut in Paris on 20th February at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt. There was something new about this choreographic event, for Tcherina thought it a good idea to approach for her programme and for three out of four ballets, producers of films and dramatic works well known to everyone, Raymond Rouleau and Jean Renoir. The choreographers M. Sparenbleck and M. Goubé were placed under their direction.

The result of this experiment was that there was a certain heaviness about the spectacle as the movement which should animate the ballet in all its parts, resulted in being stifled and shattered by the dramatic production which was imposed upon it.

Atout Coeur theme and production by Jean Marc Thibault, music by Maurice Thiriet and choreography by Don Lurio is a pleasant little farce the action of which takes place in a Parisian bar. Nothing very new or remarkable about this.

Les Amants de Teruel, produced by Raymond Rouleau with music by the composer Théodorakis was the revelation of the evening. The realistic decors by Jacques Dupont were very successful and the choreography was by

Milko Sparenbleck. It is a long story in the course of which the old Aragonese legend of love and death called Les Amants de Teruel is transposed to a group of strolling players of today. This drama is mimed, spoken, declaimed and danced by Ludmilla Tcherina and her partners Vassili Sulich and Milko Sparenbleck both of them very fine. At the end, Ludmilla Tcherina acts a very painful mad scene which lasts too long. It ends by her throwing herself under a train from a foot-bridge which overhangs a cutting along which the passenger trains pass. In this ballet, recorded noises were added to the music-passing trains, ringing of bells, the puffing of locomotives. Men on bicycles cross the stage. Signal boxes and general clamour; everything was most realistically portrayed. Mlle. Tcherina's jump from the top of the bridge was without doubt a spectacular production achievement.

A pleasing interlude to music by Scarlatti, *Le Loup et l'Agneau* gave us a chance to admire the young Ella Bogval who recently won the prize "Visa pour l'espoir."

Le Feu aux Poudres with theme and production by Jean Renoir had choreography by Paul Goubé and costumes and decors by Ludmilla Tcherina. It portrayed the struggle at times amusing, erotic and comic of two neighbouring peoples, the one composed of amazons austere and cruel and the other of boys and girls who love an open-air life, the pleasures of love and of wine. After attacks and counter-attacks, the chief amazon (Ludmilla Tcherina) falls in love with the handsome young man Stevan Grebel, a magnificent dancer who was in some ways the revelation of this première. The girls of the corps de ballet all graceful and with excellent bearing surround the promoter of this spectacle, Ludmilla Tcherina, who alone dances all the principal roles. All the men of the company merit nothing but praise.

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Monte Carlo

—By J. R. FARRINGTON

EASTER SEASON 1959

The early Easter and the demands of Opera reduced our Easter Season this year to four days. This did not deter Eugène Grunberg from importing the Grand Ballet of the Warsaw Opera, with sixty six dancers and a large staff of technicians. The company is entirely Polish and has not danced outside Poland before. But I detected none of the nervousness that I have sometimes seen when companies with little or no touring experience have appeared before this notoriously difficult audience. The company relied on three ballets; shortened versions of *Mazepa* and *Pan Twardowski*, with the second act of *Swan Lake*.

Set in the Poland of the XVII century *Mazepa* was given in six tableaux by Irena Turska after the tragic poem by Juliusz Slowacki (1809-1849) to music by Tadeusz Szeliowski and choreography by Stanislaw Miszczyk. The king (Witold Borkowski) accompanied by his page Mazepa, (Stanislaw Szymanski), is on a visit to the Voievode (Zbigniew Kilinski). He is received with much ceremony, wherein he dances with Amélie, (Olga Sawicka), the young wife of his ageing host. Frivolous and libertine, the king at once lays siege to her. Mazepa notices that Zbigniew (Bogdan Bulder) son of the Voievode by an earlier marriage, is infatuated with his step-mother. The king, disguised in Mazepa's cloak, is wounded in a duel with Zbigniew. The page, to save his master's honour, inflicts a similar wound upon himself. Later, seeking to warn Amélie that the king will stop at nothing, Mazepa goes to her room, where he starts to write a message on her fan. Hearing footsteps he hides in an alcove. Amélie and her husband enter. Heedless of her denials the Voievode orders masons to wall up the alcove. Zbigniew finds the fan and bitterly reproaches Amélie. The king arrives and orders the brickwork to be removed, Mazepa being discovered. The Voievode forces his son to challenge Mazepa, but Zbigniew turns the pistol on himself. Refusing to return to the Court Mazepa surrenders to the Voievode but the king,

fearing for his page, comes back with his bodyguard. The Voievode, overcome by shame, stabs himself before his royal master.

The effect of this tragic and dramatic ballet was heightened by the strong characterisation of the dancers. I was particularly impressed by Szymanski as Mazepa. His effortless fluency combined with fine style and elevation reminded me of John Gilpin. Szymanski has also marked dramatic talent. I much regretted that he did not appear again, for he is a dancer of the highest class. Bulder has a good stage presence and danced with dignity. Kilinski was a forceful and convincing Voievode. Olga Sawicka, whom I did not think got her full share of opportunity from the choreography, danced well as the timid and guiltless cause of all the trouble. She has danced before in Monte Carlo, with Miskovitch's Ballets 1958 de Paris. The music seemed to me somewhat colourless and hardly up to the powerful theme. Much credit is due to Lech and Michelle Zahorski for the excellent décors and costumes, the latter being some of the best I have seen here in colour, harmony and richness.

Many had doubts as to the wisdom of including Act II from *Swan Lake* in the programme. This ballet has been danced here so often that comparisons, odious or otherwise, are inevitable. Choreographer Stanislaw Miszczyk gave his Prince, Zbigniew Strzalkowski, little to do beyond follow his ballerina round the stage. Maria Krzyszkowska as Odette lacked the lyricism so necessary for this rôle. Tadeusz Zlamal as the Red Man (Rothbart) brought some sparkle into this version of the ballet with some fast and clean pirouettes.

I much enjoyed the gay and rumbustious *Pan Twardowski*. This Ballet-Pantomime in three acts by Feliks Parnell is based on the Faust legend. The ancient doctor Pan Twardowski (Zbigniew Kilinski) sells his soul to the Devil in return for his lost youth, the only stipulation being that the Devil can reclaim him in Rome. Imps put the old doctor into a cauldron from which he

emerges as a handsome youth (Bogdan Bulder). Much gaiety follows, the Devil himself taking full part. Finally, during a particularly lively party in an inn the Devil points to the inn sign. It is Rome: he claims forfeit. The rejuvenated Twardowski obtains a temporary respite by using the newly baptised child of the innkeeper as a shield. His wife, elderly and formidable (Eugeniusz Kowalczyk) has become wise to the situation and aided by housewives armed with saucepans gives the Devil a severe hiding, leaving him only his pants to escape in. But inevitably he finally gets the upper hand and Twardowski, again an old man, finds himself in the crescent moon, where he must remain until the Judgment Day as a warning to those who value pleasure above duty.

With effective décors and brilliant national costumes by Stanislaw Jarocki this ballet was danced with tremendous élan and obvious enjoyment by a large cast, which stimulated the audience to warm applause. The music of Ludomir Rozycki was appropriate and tunelessly Polish. The small and agile Włodzimierz Traczewski as the Devil was outstanding and the very spirit of impish evil. Bulder used his fine presence to good effect, though he had little to do as a dancer. Kowalczyk proved a pantomime dame of the old school as Madame Pan. Gerda Zmudzinska as the Gypsy inspired her corps de ballet in the national dances. With the accent on the Pantomime I found this ballet most entertaining and admirably produced.

Eugène Grunberg's judgment in bringing Polish Ballet to Monte Carlo was amply vindicated. For we saw the presentation of what is essentially a national school, hitherto little known in the West, with definite dramatic talent and a flair for design and production. Though it may seem ungallant I did feel that the male dancers outshone their ladies. The corps de ballet was well trained and particularly in the Polish numbers danced with a refreshing "joie de vivre." In Szymanski the Poles have a dancer of exceptional and comprehensive talent and with cultural exchanges the order of the day, is it too much to be hoped that he may be seen in London?

BALLET IN POLAND

I am indebted to extracts from the History of Polish Ballet by the late Stanislaw Glowacki for some useful notes on Ballet in Poland.

It was in 1518 that Queen Bona, a daughter of the powerful Sforza family in Milan and wife of King Sigismund the Old, brought Italian dancers to Poland. At first the innovation did not appeal to the Polish nobility, steeped in the tradition of slow and stately measures or in the lively movements of the peasant dances. Later the Court adapted itself to the development of Ballet as seen in the other European Courts.

In 1638 a theatre was added to the Royal Palace in Warsaw and a company of Italian dancers engaged. In the first half of the XVIII century many foreign companies were imported, notably Dechallière from Paris, the Dresden Ballet and Bartoldi from Venice. In 1725 the new Opera House was inaugurated with a production of the ballet *Proserpine*. Many of the great noble families built private theatres and engaged foreign teachers to instruct their countryfolk. The foundation

of Polish National Ballet may be credited to Tyzenhausen, second royal treasurer, who in 1765 formed a school at Grodno for the training of young peasants. This moved to Warsaw in 1785 where it was adopted by the King, Stanislas-Auguste, who entitled its graduates "the King's Company of Dancers." A Frenchman, Ledoux, was maître de ballet. This school still exists.

The fall of the Polish Empire in 1794 led to the dispersion of the dancers and it was only in 1818 that a new start could be made. Though essentially national in sentiment, close touch was kept with contemporary trends. Maria Taglionis danced many times in Warsaw, where her father, Philipe, was for several years director of the National School. In 1843 Lola Montez and in 1853 Carlotta Grisi danced in Warsaw. Carlo Blasis was maître de ballet in 1856 and in the early years of this century Enrico Cecchetti was director of the School.

For some years before the last war Polish Ballet lost many of its most promising dancers, first to the Russian Imperial Ballet

and later to Diaghilev and Pavlova. The two Nijinskis, Krzesinska, Idzikowski and Woiskowski come to mind.

Today Polish Ballet is again flourishing under the Minister of Culture and Art. A new Opera House, seating 2,000 and with every modern refinement, will shortly open in Warsaw. Several Ballet Schools are at work, that directed by Leon Woiskowski, with over 200 pupils, being the most important. Strongly influenced by three personalities, Arnold Szyfman, Nijinska and Woiskowski, the Ballet is still essentially national and at the moment outside influence seems neither to be sought nor desired.

Polish Ballet has much to offer to the West, particularly in its powerful and effective dramatisation. But seclusion from the wide outside world of Ballet can only lead to a limited and provincial outlook and these talented dancers would surely benefit from a closer liaison with world Ballet. Perhaps the recent visits to Monte Carlo and Paris will encourage this.

Munich

—By DR. WILFRIED HOFMANN

BALLET MATINÉE 1959 IN MUNICH

On March 22nd the Freunde des Balletts Society in Munich launched another of their yearly matinée performances at Gartnerplatz Theatre. This time they staged a quite ambitious programme strictly limited to items of classical ballet. Their "joint forces" consisted of a good number of prominent German dancers (Dulce Anaya and Heino Hallhuber from Munich, Rainer Köchermann from Frankfurt, Katharina v. Bülow and Ilse Hürtig from Berlin) as well as young talent. The State Opera Ballet School as an introduction demonstrated how to work properly with children (and well trained ones at that!). In 12-year-old Bika Nitschkoff, of Bulgarian origin, this school has phenomenal talent, already highly praised by Arnold Haskell and George Balanchine. Bika certainly is a baby ballerina of exceptional physical and artistic maturity who could well be a Toumanova, Baronova, or Vyrubova. In the Lula v. Sachnowsky group Angèle Albrecht (16) was the most promising asset of this age group.

Not so convincing were the ballet premières: Henry Holth, an American dancer of the State Opera Ballet, as a newcomer in the field of choreography entered *Fantasy over a Theme*, to music by Barber. This ballet—if to be categorised—rather belongs to choreography over a certain mood than over a definite action. Two lovers (here in the fauna of birds) are separated through the

impact of the male's contact with the stainless and absolute ideal (here represented by a danseuse who, as the nightingale is carried about during the whole ballet in spagat position and never touches the stage!). Holth—understating and cool—clearly follows patterns of the American School, comparable to West Coast Progressive in the world of jazz (typical, i.e. an understated "manège" where the dancer does not leave the ground). However, while style and movements fit the music, the choreography appears too much "thought up." It is intellectual work without emotional spontaneity.

The second première, *Diana Sopresa* (music commissioned from Harald Banter; libretto, decors, choreography: Peter Roleff) was executed by the Roleff-King Ballet Group with great discipline and symmetry, but although cleverly arranged, had very little choreography to perform. This ballet gives another version of a human being (Köchermann as Aktäon) being turned into an animal—this time in the realm of ancient mythology.

Maybe due to a last minute replacement the action did not come out as properly developed. The soloists (rather handicapped by group movements) seemed at times to improvise neo-classical variations. That way the descriptive music, dominated the ballet. Highlights of the matinée was the *Don Quixote* Pas de Deux performed by Anaya and Hallhuber—who this time did

not partner faultlessly. It gave the programme a special interest to see for the first time Heino Hallhuber and Rainer Köchermann, Germany's best technician, perform during the same matinée. There was also another "first": Dulce Anaya danced *The Dying Swan*, for the first time in Europe. While the burden of proof heavily weighs against any dancer who tries to justify her intrusion on this dance, Miss Anaya gave witness of a definite validity. Choreographically she performed *The Swan* as close to the original as seems possible (except for a detail of the very last movement). She may justly be added to the small list of those who without being sacrilegious may recreate *The Swan*.

NEWS FROM GERMANY

Maria Fris (Frankfurt City Opera Ballet) is now permanently joining Bejart's Company.

Werner Ulbrich, up to now ballet master and choreographer at City Opera of Leipzig, East Germany, fled to the West. At the moment he stages *Symphony Classique* (Prokofiev), *Bolero* (Ravel), *Four Temperaments* (Hindemith) and *Pulcinella* (Stravinsky) for Stuttgart Opera—due in the middle of May.

The East German Berlin State Opera Ballet prepares *Weiberstreik* (Mohaupt) and *Swan Lake* (Tchaikovsky) under the direction of Lilo Gruber. The company now has 100 dancers, and teachers from Leningrad.

Holland

—By JANET SINCLAIR

After a somnolent winter season, the two major Dutch companies suddenly produced six premières within two weeks in March. First came the Netherlands Ballet, one of whose premières should never have been presented in its present form, being poorly danced, under-rehearsed and vilely decorated. Of the other two, *The Miraculous Mandarin* (choreography, Arno Vashegyi and Vera Pasztor) offered little but a magnificent performance by Aart Vertegen—a performance quite in the class of Platoff's Malatesta in 1937, while *Kleine-Avondspel*, by Rudi van Dantzig in neo-Balanchine style, demonstrated unanswerably that this young man has developed into a professional worthy of judgment only by the highest standards: and this after only five ballets. Milly Gramberg danced with great charm and delicacy in the last-named work.

Of the three premières given by the Ballet der Lage Landen, the most unpretentious and most entirely successful was Suzanna Egri's *Rencontre*, a pas de deux danced with simplicity and sincerity at the performance I attended by Panchita de Peri and Ben de Rochemont, a well matched pair. Egri's other ballet, *Symphonie Classique*, is unfortunate in challenging comparison with Tudor, and is set in a hard style which sets the dancers of this troupe off to their worst advantage.

Of *Carnaval*, mounted by Michael Holmes, it would doubtless be kinder to say nothing, were it not that the critical situation at present obtaining here is not likely to be improved by kindness. Therefore let me gently suggest to those who will doubtless

be infuriated by the following suggestions that I do not make them "to annoy, because I know it teases": I make them because I have seen *Carnaval* performed, not once but dozens of times, under Fokine's own direction, and because if they were followed the result might be more in accordance with his intentions. (1) Reverse the miscast Columbine and Papillon, if it is really impossible for prestige or other reasons to cast Lieke de Leeuw as Columbine. (2) Implore the pianist to play practically every number much, much slower—the three girls in "Chopin," one of the loveliest, dreamiest numbers Fokine ever arranged do not need to scuttle round the stage like agitated marionettes, to take one example. (3) Dress four corps de ballet girls up as Philistines and put them on—the last number looks bare and incomplete without them. (4) Cut the choreography invented for Pierrot to the "Replique" music—let me whisper a little secret: Fokine never set this music at all, he just left it out!

If Mascha ter Weeme plays her cards well, she now has the whole ballet situation in Holland in her hands and, with the disappearance of Françoise Adret and Sonia Gaskell, from the scene and the subsequent chaos in both their companies, should be able to emerge, after twelve years' struggling, as the most important Dutch director. However, if more attention is not paid to such details as those set out above when mounting any ballet whatsoever—let alone a classic of the calibre of *Carnaval*—the new Amsterdam Ballet will sink, subsidy of forty thousand pounds and all, before it is properly afloat.

Egypt

—By WALENS

The inauguration of the superb Nile-Hilton hotel attracted many guests, amongst them stars from Hollywood who arrived by special plane from Cairo.

During this dazzling event a display of ballet presentations were given in the vast hall "Mille et une Nuits." The spectacles continued for seven evenings.

Fiancée du Nil, a ballet by the painter Ahmed Mandour, achieved a success. The artist also has the credit for the rich costumes and decors.

The scenario presents in the first act dances in the village where Nefterteri and Semouh fell in love. According to the legend, beautiful Nefterteri is to be chosen as a sacrifice to be offered to the Nile.

In the second act, we see the ritual dances of this sacrifice and the despair of Semouh who commits suicide by throwing himself into the Nile, and in the third act we see the bed of the Nile where the souls of the lovers are reunited.

More than 50 dancers took part in this ballet. There was no star billing and the success was shared by all.

The contribution of seven private schools made it possible for Mr. Mandour to present his first great spectacle after 18 months of work and it brought praise from the critics.

There is no great choreographic invention in the dances, which are adapted to the abilities of the performers. Each one deploys personal qualities which are brought into the ensemble of the dances.

In *Bride of the Nile* which again tells us a legend of the time of the Pharaohs, the music fails to amalgamate the ballet.

Finally, it has come to pass. A Gala Performance of Dance took place at the Metropolitan Opera where four ballets were premiered in which the resident corps de ballet was used as best could be. There was an excitement generated by great expectations in the full house.

The greatest significance must be attached to the fact that the first step was made toward the realisation of an opera ballet at the Met. that can also function independently from the operatic repertory. It was, no doubt, the first step in the right direction.

Nobody could have thought that the Met. Ballet could outdance Balanchine's company, or the Royal Ballet for that matter; that the corps de ballet would shine in unmatched brilliance and the company might have produced a few exciting soloists. But Edith Jerell and Audrey Keane have done extremely well in Antony Tudor's ballet, although there it was less a matter of technical virtuosity than the projection of mood and emotion. On the other hand, it may have been unwise, or at least too soon, to have pushed Bruce Marks so much into the foreground. He is a fine, sensitive dancer who has fared better in the modern than the classic field.

Rudolf Bing, the director of the Met., has tried to give the ballets the best possible physical production. The costumes were all in good taste and those by Karinska for *Les Diamants* exceedingly beautiful. The decor by Jac Venza for John Butler's ballet was stunning, the one by John Ward fitted in its way the elusiveness of Herbert Ross's work. Lupe Serrano, this season's prima ballerina of the Met., and Scott Douglas as the premier danseur were used to great advantage. Nora Kaye and Bambi Linn were the guest artists.

It was in the subject matter in some of the choreographic conceptions where the most obvious weaknesses of this first all-ballet evening could be found. John Butler's *In the Beginning* dealt with Adam and Eve and their temptation in Eden. The first image awakening with Eve wound around his chest as if she were about to blossom

into being from one of his ribs, was as striking as it was inventive. So was the last image, the horror of their sudden awareness and the realisation of the Lord's wrath. But between opening and finale the ballet was wanting in imagination, became pedestrian and derivative. Bambi Linn, famous for her dancing on television, was wrongly cast as Eve, and Bruce Marks could not cope with the demanding part of Adam. I wondered that Mr. Butler should have chosen this theme at all when, only a short while ago, Martha Graham in her *Embattled Garden* conceived a choreographically exciting dance on the same topic.

In *The Exchange*, Herbert Ross lived up to his reputation as a daring young man. I have never heard more contradictory interpretations of any ballet than his. One figure was thought to be Jesus or the devil, another Icarus or Homunculus. Some of the initiated claimed it was based on a story called, "The Sin of Jesus," but I was glad that no programme note put my imagination into a strait jacket. To me, it was a girl's prayer for the ideal image of man. She had to content herself with the frailty of the incomplete human being, and, when the ideal finally entered her reality, she was unable to accept it. However elusive Mr. Ross's ballet was, it was artistically challenging and, in Nora Kaye's delivery, dramatically convincing—notwithstanding the fact that I was not quite sure of what I was convinced. Scott Douglas was very impressive in his part.

Alexandra Danilova's divertissement, *Les Diamants*, gave Lupe Serrano an opportunity to show her virtuosity, but it seems to me that with such a pure ballet only the creative mind of a Balanchine can gratify the taste of our sophisticated time.

Hail and Farewell, the new Antony Tudor ballet to two early works by Richard Strauss and his four last *Lieder*, showed the hand of the master in spots only. This ballet dealing with the abstract notions of a first meeting and a last goodbye, was rather pale in its two orchestral sections for the corps de ballet and rose to impressive heights in the four

solos beautifully danced by Nora Kaye, Lupe Serrano, Edith Jerell and Audrey Keane. They were highly effective mood pieces evoked by, but independent from, the music. The noted soprano Eleanor Steber was heard in the four songs.

A beginning was made. Let us hope it will not remain a beginning.

* * *

Another daring venture was launched by the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Alan Banks accepted the sheer impossible task of whipping a ballet company of still inexperienced performers into shape within a year. Well, he has achieved a great deal, but did not succeed in giving Brooklyn a professionally acceptable Civic Ballet Company as yet.

Its first programme consisted of Schumann's "Prelude Brillante," the ballet *Jeux d'Enfants* with music by Bizet, and excerpts from the *Nutcracker*. Banks' choreography was pleasant and most of the time adequate. It was obviously limited by the material he had to work with. Kathe Berl's costumes gave colour to the many drab and heavy moments. No one of the company should be singled out since all its members still have a long way to go.

The two sponsors of this enterprise, the comedian Sam Levenson, who was born in Brooklyn, and Alexandra Danilova, who was undoubtedly not, addressed the audience. Mr. Levenson expressed his joy that Brooklyn, like most European cities, now has its own ballet company, too. He only forgot to mention that, with more means at their disposal, it took all of them quite a few years—or decades—to develop a professional company.

There is no denying the fact that the Brooklyn Civic Ballet Company still has a steep road to climb. All one can do at this point is to congratulate William McKelvy Martin, director of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, on the splendid idea of having brought such a company into existence and to wish the artists much luck and the necessary patience to grow into real professionalism.

Sweden

The Direction of the Royal Opera has announced the appointment of Caj Selling to the rank of premier danseur. Mr. Selling has recently been granted leave of absence from the Royal Swedish Ballet to appear with Beryl Grey during her guest appearance with the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, where he danced the prince in *Swan Lake*, and *Sleeping Beauty*, and Albrecht in *Giselle*.

Gerd Anderson, newest première danseuse at the Opera, has flown to Hollywood to appear in a television film with Gene Kelly. She rejoins the company in Paris.

Rolf de Maré will renew his association with ballet since the days of his "Ballets Suedois" in the 20's, when he sponsors the appearance of the Royal Swedish Ballet at the Théâtre des Nations in Paris at the end of April. The programme will consist entirely of Swedish ballets current in the repertoire at the Opera in Stockholm. These include Birgit Cullberg's *Moon Reindeer*, *Medea*, and *Miss Julie*; Ivo Cramer's *The Prodigal Son*; Birgit Akesson's *Minotaurus*; and Björn Holmgren's *Swedish Rhapsody*.

Miss Mary Skeaping, Director of the Ballet, will present eight of the company's principal dancers at the Bath Festival in England in June. Among those to appear are Marianne Orlando, Elsa-Marianne von Rosen, Björn Holmgren, and Caj Selling.

Mario Mengarelli will lead a group of dancers from the Opera on a provincial tour of Sweden during the Summer when they will present a shortened version of *Coppelia*.

Birgit Cullberg's *Moon Reindeer*, with music by Riisager, and décor by Per Falk had an extremely successful première at the Opera in Stockholm, with Marianne Orlando, Caj Selling, and Björn Holmgren in the principal roles. Gerd Anderson, Mario Mengarelli, and Gunnar Randin in the alternate cast, also met with great success. Cullberg's *Medea* was in the programme offered for 13 performances in the City theatres in suburban Stockholm. Since then it has been revived at the Opera with Marianne Orlando as Medea, Jacques de Lisle as Jason, and Bibe Grefeberg as Creusa.

Miss Cullberg has been invited to stage

her *Moon-Reindeer* for the Norwegian ballet, and *Medea* for the Danes.

The première of Elsa-Marianne von Rosen's *Prometheus* to the music of Beethoven was held on the same evening as *Moon-Reindeer*. *Prometheus* was originally choreographed and performed for a student matinée at the Koncerthuset with the Stockholm Philharmonic. Miss von Rosen enlarged this version for its performance at the Opera, and danced in it herself with Björn Holmgren.

The management of the Royal Opera has engaged Birgit Akesson, the modern dancer, to stage the dances for Karl-Birger Blomdahl's "science fiction" opera *Aniara*. This is one of the operas to be shown at the Edinburgh Festival this summer, and Miss Akesson will dance and mime Isagel which is a non-singing role.

The ballet connected with the Malmö Stadsteatern has been appearing in ballet-master Carl-Gustav Kruuse's version of the Rossini *Boutique Fantasque*, as part of a double-bill.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WONDERFUL AMBASSADORS

Since Robert Lunnon's arrival in the United States slightly over a year ago, he has been successful in organising the Regional Ballet Ensemble of Chicago, a group of forty-five dancers with Doreen Tempest and Robert Lunnon as leading dancers. Mr. Lunnon also has concrete plans for a touring company in the fall of next year. This has been incorporated (not for profit) under the name of The Allegro American Ballet Company.

Mr. and Mrs. Lunnon are greatly admired for their integrity, ability and hard work. We greatly appreciate what they are giving the people of Chicago. We consider them wonderful ambassadors.

Mary M. Comstock, President of The Allegro School of Ballet, Chicago.

WAR STORY FROM TASMANIA

Dear Miss Herf,

I was an enthusiastic member of an amateur ballet group in London during the war at a time when the acquisition of a pair of new ballet shoes was a phenomenon. My one and only pair, of black leather, had worn into holes, I was practising in an old pair of canvas ones which had once been blocked, given to me by a friend, and the time was fast approaching for the annual performance. Someone vaguely mentioned a man in Waterloo Road who could repair dancing shoes, so I set off in search of the place and found a gloomy and dilapidated tiny shop, which I entered full of hope. The little old cobbler (who would have been a natural for the part in *Chu-Chin-Chow*) listened to my story, took the shoes in his hands, turned them over slowly to look at the soles and remarked solemnly "they must surely have been made in the backwoods of Canada." I took back my shoes, muttering I must have come to the wrong shop.

I did find the right shop eventually, but was never successful in having my shoes returned repaired. I left a self-addressed postcard but never received it saying my shoes were ready.

As far as I know, they may still be in that shop on a ledge under the counter!

As for the show, I whitened the old canvas shoes, sewed on new ribbons, re-patched the toes with yet more adhesive plaster and they just survived the two performances before disintegrating beyond salvation.

Ballet Today is obtainable in the book shops here, but I have a good friend in London who has kept me constantly supplied. I thoroughly enjoy everything in it and feel I can keep in touch with a love I have now lost.

Owing to the high cost of freight we seldom have a ballet company visit Tasmania, the last time being in 1952 when the National (Australian) Ballet came over from the Mainland. Consequently the only live performances we have are done by the schools in their annual displays.

However, we have had several of the good films shown in Hobart, the last one being the wonderful Bolshoi one.

Congratulations on your publication and best wishes from Tasmania.

Yours sincerely,

ETHEL MCCULLOCH (Miss).

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PROGRAMMES FOR THE MONTH

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

30th Apr.	Thur.	(eve)	<i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> (Nerina, Blair)
2nd May	Sat.	(mat)	<i>Dances Concertantes, Petrushka, Les Patineurs</i>
6th "	Wed.	(eve)	<i>Le Lac des Cygnes</i> (Seymour, MacLeary)
9th "	Sat.	(eve)	<i>Coppelia, La Valse</i>
11th "	Mon.	(eve)	<i>Les Patineurs, Giselle</i> (Heaton, MacLeary)
13th "	Wed.	(eve)	<i>Les Patineurs, Giselle</i> (Beriosova, Ashbridge)
16th "	Sat.	(mat)	<i>Les Rendezvous, La Fete Etrange, The Firebird</i>
18th "	Mon.	(eve)	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Chatfield, Beriosova)
20th "	Wed.	(eve)	<i>Dances Concertantes, Giselle</i> (Linden, Chatfield)
21st "	Thur.	(eve)	<i>Dances Concertantes, Giselle</i> (Alexander, McCleary)
23rd "	Sat.	(mat)	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (Page, Hynd)
23rd "	Sat.	(eve)	<i>Les Patineurs, Petrushka, Les Rendezvous</i>
25th "	Mon.	(eve)	<i>Les Sylphides, Firebird, Les Patineurs</i> (Page, Hynd)
26th "	Tues.	(eve)	<i>Les Patineurs, Giselle</i> (Linden, Chatfield)
30th "	Sat.	(mat)	<i>Les Rendezvous, Dances Concertantes, Sleeping Beauty Act III</i>

THE ROYAL BALLET ON TOUR

May 11th-May 16th	<i>The Pavilion, Bournemouth</i>
May 18th-May 23rd	<i>New Theatre, Cardiff</i>
May 25th-June 6th	<i>Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham</i>

FESTIVAL BALLET FOREIGN TOUR

7th April-13th May	<i>Teatro Liceo, Barcelona</i>
13th May-20th May	<i>Madrid</i>
23rd May-26th May	<i>Grand Theatre (Festival Bordeaux)</i>
26th May-8th June	<i>Italy, Genoa, Turin</i>
11th June-14th June	<i>Stadt Theatre (Zurich Festival)</i>
16th June-18th June	<i>Lausanne Festival</i>
20th June	<i>Vichy Festival</i>

BALLET RAMBERT ON TOUR

W/c 27th Apr.	<i>The White Rock Pavilion, Hastings</i>
" 8th June	<i>Essoldo Theatre, Brighton</i>

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For the first time in its history the Royal Ballet School gave a performance at Covent Garden. The ballet was *Coppelia* and with the exception of the three main roles the entire cast of approximately 90 were students from the school. Antoinette Sibley and Graham Usher are the centre figures in our picture.

THE ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL IN COPPELIA

AT COVENT GARDEN

IT was a splendid idea to present the Royal Ballet School (together with three young soloists of the company who were trained at the School) in an afternoon of ballet, presented in a fully professional manner at Covent Garden. This sort of thing was and is done in Russia, and played an important part in developing the great tradition of dancing of which we are the heirs. The house was packed, and one could feel a great deal of excitement in the air: many young pupils were there to cheer on their fellow-pupils, also a good many parents, but the general public was there too in full force.

What gave the occasion special poignancy was the chance of seeing how Antoinette Sibley would perform in a major three-act role, long before she would normally be given such an exacting assignment. In fact, she danced superbly, establishing herself unmistakably as one of the great ballerinas of today. She was not fully at ease in Act I, showing from time to time a little uncertainty in her gestures; but, like the fine artist she is, she rose to the challenge, taking strength and confidence from the enthusiasm of the audience, and she launched herself into Act II with the most heart-warming gaiety and spontaneity. Very, very rarely does one see a dancer on the stage behaving as *naturally* as this: every reaction had the stamp of truth, and yet was projected out beyond the footlights with the assurance which normally only comes with many years of experience—if ever. In fact, Antoinette Sibley has matured as quickly as Margot Fonteyn did in the late thirties, and shows promise of something like the same extraordinary range. She made a completely convincing Swanilda, full of charm and ebullience... notwithstanding the fact that she is clearly by nature gifted for mysterious, exotic parts, and can only show a small part of her creative power in a demi-caractère role. When she began the pas de deux in Act III—which, in fact, is purely classical, and has the benefit of a

suggestion of moonlight—she gave a very clear indication of what triumphs she may have one day when some great choreographer takes advantage of her special gifts. One cannot compare her in style or temperament to any other ballerina: she is Sibley, and *sui generis*.

She is particularly fortunate in starting off not only with remarkable stage presence and personality—when she is dancing in the middle of the corps de ballet, she seems to be made of different clay from the others, and one can look only at her—but also with a very strong technique. The role of Swanilda is a difficult one technically, and this is particularly true of the pas de deux in Act III; more than one talented danseuse has met her Waterloo there. But Sibley was in excellent form by this time and sailed through the pas de deux with every appearance of ease. As for the Spanish and Scottish solos in Act III she made them look childishly easy, and showed admirable brio in the Spanish one.

Graham Usher did as well as could be expected under the circumstances in Act I and Act II. What little dancing he had to do was strong and clean, but his mime was rather tentative; one could see that the conventional gestures did not mean very much to him. He must learn to give his face, which is naturally quite round, a more interesting shape by make-up, trying out various experiments and asking friends how he looks from the front.

The moment he started his variation in the Act III pas de deux, he looked a different man. Gone was all tentativeness; instead one saw complete assurance, and quite remarkable power, elasticity and suppleness, as well as excellent line. It was as if a bright butterfly had emerged from a rather ordinary chrysalis. He raised his legs in the air as easily (and as high when this was appropriate) as almost any ballerina, but he did so with the virile attack proper to a man, and he



The pupils at the Royal Ballet School come from many parts of the world. Amongst those taking part and seen here in this rehearsal picture were (*l to r*) Amira Mayroz of Tel Aviv, Gwen Looker of London, Su Chin of Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, and Elizabeth Edminston of Gosport.

covered the stage without effort, taking possession of it with the lord-like ease of the true danseur noble. His elevation was like that of the best of the Russians, and his turns solid; in fact as a dancer he seemed capable of tackling anything. Clearly what he needs is to work on his acting.

Much the same could be said of the corps de ballet. Like the principals, they were excellently produced by Peggy van Praagh (who was loudly applauded by them in gratitude at the final curtain) and they kept up a real feeling of animation; the whole time one could see them taking a lively interest in what was going on—which is more than one can always say of the main company. But when they had to make conventional gestures they did so in a very mechanical way, putting no feeling or real meaning into them; here it looks as if something is wrong with their training.

On the other hand, Sibley's gestures were splendid, and so were those of Lambert Cox (now with the company, but trained at the School) who took the role of Dr. Coppélius. When these two were playing together in Act II they "fed" each other most beautifully, each reacting with sensitivity and good timing to the actions of the other. Lambert

Cox had an excellent make-up, and created a really convincing old man—crotchety and quick-tempered, but with an engaging rough geniality, and a glinting eye which argued a keen sense of humour.

It was exciting to try and pick out future soloists from among the young dancers in the corps de ballet. Deanne Bergsma (who made a good impression when she appeared in a recent Sunday Ballet Club performance) showed a fine, cool assurance as Prayer. One of the boys leading the Csardas in Act I (rather short in stature—would this be Michael Coleman?) showed promise of becoming a fine character dancer. And Su Chin gave an admirably polished and mannered performances as the Chinese doll. Some of the other soloists were not quite up to the demands of their roles—but the same can be said of the performances of the professional company. The show as a whole reached an amazingly high standard, and one could enjoy it wholeheartedly, without having to make allowances for inexperience. In fact, it could stand comparison with the performance of first-rate professional companies. A fine precedent has now been established, and I hope this show will become a regular institution.

FERNAU HALL

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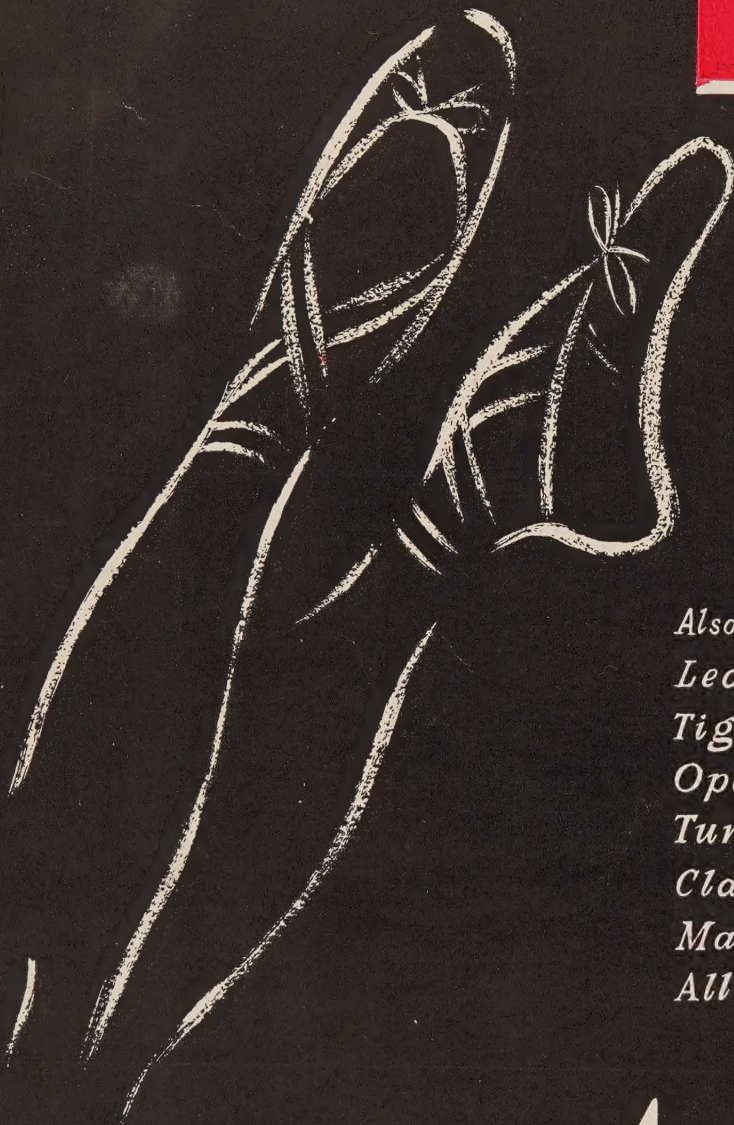
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